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PIONEERS AND PATRIOTISM

Address of Ernest F. Acheson at the Farmers' Picnic, Stout's
Grove, East Finley Township, Washington County,
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It is 140 years since this beautiful section of country in which we live was opened for settlement. The fame of the rich lands in "the horse shoe," as the region between the Monongahela and the Ohio rivers was called in those early days, spread abroad through all the eastern counties of Pennsylvania and of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. The new comers from across the sea, the sons of old Ulster in the north of Ireland and those who had flown from oppression and religious persecution in Scotland and England, were told of the wonderful fertility of the country we now inhabit. A stream of emigration passed over the Alleghany mountains and the ax of the hardy pioneer began to clear these hills and valleys of the dense forest which covered them.

Within six years after these lands could be patented and a year before Thomas Jefferson wrote the immortal Declaration of Independence came Abraham Enlow and settled within the limits of what is now East Finley township. He built a block house, famous throughout this region as a refuge in time of peril from Indians. He was soon followed by the Roneys, who likewise erected a block house or fort, near which occurred the tragic death of eight members of the McIntosh family, murdered by the Indians, tomahawked and scalped. Only one daughter who had been sent to a distant pasture with a horse escaped to tell the terrible story at Roney's block house.

Other places of refuge in those perilous times were Beeman's block house and Campbell's block house in which the sturdy pioneers took refuge when necessary from the savages. Their work in the fields had to be carried on while the rifle was kept near at hand and sentinels were posted to give warning of danger. Such was the condition in this region for 20 years after the first settlers came. For two decades the Ohio river was an insuperable barrier to the onward march of civilization. Not until after the battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 and Wayne's treaty with the Indians of the Northwest Territory the year following, were the inhabitants of this region free from fear of Indian incursions.

In the meantime many sturdy sons of old Scotland, of Ulster, of the Quakers of England and the Scotch-Irish from the seaboard settlements had made homes here. Among these were the Montgomerys, the Elliotts, peaceful Quakers, who came as early as 1780; the Cracrafts, Scotch-Irish, in 1781; the five Sprowls brothers, before 1782—enterprising Englishmen, one of whom, Hugh Sprowls, was with Colonel Crawford, the friend of Washington, in the ill-fated expedition against Sandusky where Crawford was burned at the stake; Henry Holmes, an Irishman, in 1780, and James Beeham perhaps before that date; Alexander Burns, a Scotchman, probably a kinsman of the immortal bard, who wrote "A man's a man for a' that," in 1780; the Byers

F 151
W 3 A 17

family, Irish, in 1786; the Sutherlands and the Fraziers, both Scotch, the same year; and the Hendersons a year later. Many other families which have left their impress upon this region were among those early settlers. Familiar names found in the records are the Carrolls, two of whom suffered from Indian ferocity; Hill, Wolf, Post, McCleary, Martin, Rockafellow, Vansyock, England, Knox, Rose, Toland, Porter, Davidson, Davis, McCoy, Isaac Lucas, a Revolutionary soldier and aidecamp to General Washington, William Gunn, from old Aberdeen, in Scotland, and Alexander Gunn to whom he was not related, the Hunters, Stouts and Shorts and others whose names are familiar to us all.

In 1788, seven years before the Indian troubles were settled, Finley township was erected. It embraced all of what is now East and West Finley townships and Rich Hill township, Greene county. It was 30 miles from north to south, a veritable principality in extent and resources. Robert Morris, a patriot of the Revolution, who financed the colonies in that heroic struggle for freedom, owned 30,000 acres in old Finley township. It was one of the disastrous land speculations which brought him to poverty and the debtors prison in his old age. This tract was sold, divided into 75 farms of 400 acres each, most of which were purchased by Scotchmen, so that this neighborhood came to be known as "the Scotch settlement."

These pioneers, our forefathers, were imbued with a love of liberty. They willingly endured hardships that their children might worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences and enjoy the blessings of freedom. Many of them left their farms before they were cleared to fight the battles of the Revolution. They were with Washington at Valley Forge and at Yorktown. Again when Detroit was surrendered a wave of patriotism swept over this region and Washington county sent more soldiers to the war of '12 than any county in the Union. Among them were many patriotic sons of old Finley. So when the tocsin of war again sounded for the dreadful civil conflict of '61, the boys who had breathed the free air of

these noble hills, were among those to promptly respond. On many a bloody battle field they "gave the last full measure of devotion" for the country which their forefathers subdued the wilderness to create.

The opportunity comes to few men to serve their country as did the pioneers or the soldiers of our various wars. It is occasionally given to the members of one generation to fight for their country by shouldering a musket and carrying a knapsack. But it is given to every citizen to defend the noble heritage which came to us through the sufferings and privations of the pioneers and the service in warlike camps of the soldiers who wore the blue. Every man has a more effective weapon with which to defend his country than the old flintlock rifle or even the deadly long range Mauser. This is the ballot.

If we are worthy of the splendid heritage which God has given us through the privations and toils of our brave forebears we will so use the priceless privilege of the elective franchise as to make this a better country for our children and our children's children. We must above everything else stand for the strict enforcement of the laws of the land. Men cannot choose what laws they will obey. The good citizen obeys all laws. He follows the divine injunction, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." We must sternly rebuke and punish crimes against the ballot. These are all too common. Men do not appreciate the sanctity of the ballot box and when partisan feeling is aroused or a factional fight is in progress will either buy votes or induce those who are not entitled to do so to vote; and other men are willing to condone fraud if it is done by or in behalf of the party or faction with which they are affiliated. These vile practices have gone so far in some of the counties of this state that Judge Brumm, of Schuylkill, has proposed to brand the forehead of any one convicted of polling an illegal vote or of buying or selling a vote, with the letter "T," for traitor. While such a punishment cannot be inflicted under our constitution, we can enact stringent laws for the protection of the bal-

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205

lot and we can as individuals help to make a public sentiment which will render odious the boodler and ballot box stuffer. The red hot branding iron of righteous indignation should be felt by the conscienceless violator of our election laws and the finger of public scorn should point to him as a traitor who possesses all the despicable qualities of Judas Iscariot, Benedict Arnold and John Wilkes Booth.

The ballot can be used to conquer the insidious foes who seek by legislative enactment to secure special privilege. We must have further regulation and control of the gigantic corporations engaged in interstate commerce. The Roosevelt policies must be carried to their logical conclusion. I was never an admirer of the infidel, Robert G. Ingersoll, but in his last years he said one thing with which I fully agree and that was that he had always been a believer in the tariff and favored the protection of all infant industries but that when these infant industries grew to be giants who wore seven league boots and could kick the stuffing out of you he was no longer interested in their protection. The ballot can protect us from the exactions of the vast aggregations of capital which have come to be known as trusts. The dweller on these hills can get a clear view of the National problems which this generation must face. He is likely to decide that hereafter our system of taxation must be modeled after those progressive European nations, England and Germany, and the proper burden placed upon the multi-millionaires who have been enabled to pile up enormous fortunes under the protection of our laws. The income tax and the inheritance tax can come none too soon to relieve the poor and those in moderate circumstance, as more than 95 per cent of our people are, of the rapidly increasing burdens of taxation which the widely expanding fields of public endeavor require and which modern conditions of civilization demand.

With the ballot we can push forward those movements which vitally affect the local community. Paramount among these are the efforts for better roads and better schools. The public

schools have been called the citadel of our liberties. While we have accomplished much for the cause of public education in Pennsylvania our schools are far behind those of New England and many of the Western states. There, schools are centralized and graded so that better work can be done. A township like East Finley should have a single school building, centrally located, of handsome architectural design, with modern conveniences and as well equipped as any city school in the land. To and from this central school all pupils should be hauled in comfortable conveyances at the public expense. Do you say the township can not afford it? I say it can. The argument of expense was used against the public school law of 1834 and only the burning eloquence of the "Old Commoner", Thaddeus Stevens, saved it in the lower house. Washington county had a glorious part in the enactment of that first law for free public schools. Under the leadership of John L. Gow, a native of New England, who had made his home in this county, a man in whom progressive ideas concerning public education had been instilled, a strong sentiment for the important measure was created here. It so happened that Col. Thomas Ringland, of Morris township, was speaker of the senate, and William Patterson, of Crosscreek township, speaker of the house. Both were ardent advocates of free schools, used their influence for the bill and signed it when passed. At that time my father was the law partner of Isaac Leet, a distinguished member of the bar. Mr. Leet was elected to the state senate in 1834. Among my father's papers I found a petition sent to Mr. Leet in 1835, signed by 489 taxpayers of Washington county praying for the repeal of the common school law. They asked for this on the ground of the great expense of the system which it was alleged the people could not bear. In the 74 years which have passed since, a wonderful expansion of the public school system has taken place. Those who founded it never dreamed of its growth to present proportions. The school expenditures of these days would have shocked those petitioners

for repeal could they have foreseen what was coming. And yet would any person in this audience, if I were to produce that old petition, be proud of the fact that his father or grandfather had put his name upon it? You may be just as certain that no descendant of any one here today will rejoice in the fact that you opposed the expansion of the public school system.

The movements for good schools and good roads should go hand in hand. Good roads are taken as a sign of the highest civilization. The old Romans were ahead of us in providing them. They built magnificent thoroughfares more than 2,000 years ago which still stand as a monument to their greatness. After wading in the mud for a century and a third isn't it time that our people provided themselves with solid, modernly constructed highways? It is only eleven years since the rural delivery system was inaugurated in Washington county. In that time we have witnessed a great awakening of civic pride and the development of a sentiment for better roads. Nine years ago the National Department of Agriculture made an experiment in the building of good roads in this county. One section was built of macadam and one of brick. This work was intended as an object lesson for our people and it has proved to be one of great value. After experiment and trial the people seem to have come to the conclusion that the most durable road is that built of brick. Our mileage of public thoroughfares is so large that the co-operation of state, county and township must be complete and harmonious if this generation is to see an adequate system of good roads constructed. The state and the county authorities should build as rapidly as they can. Each township should likewise build its portion of public highway. Several townships of Washington county have already built sections of brick roads. Others are arranging to do so. I hope that East Finley and its neighboring townships may soon adopt this policy and each year build a section, no matter how small it be, of permanent road. A start must be made somewhere and no petty local jealousy should prevent the inauguration of the work, even if

the geographical location of the road to be improved is such that many of the taxpayers never have occasion to use it. The inauguration and prosecution of a good roads program will send abroad the fame of any township which adopts it, will make prospective purchasers anxious to secure farms within its limits and enhance the value of property.

As good citizens we can promote those things which contribute to the happiness and well being of our fellow man and advance the Kingdom of Righteousness. The Creator dealt with this region with a bountiful hand. It is blessed as no other portion of God's footstool has been. His gifts have been lavish—a soil of exceeding fertility, fine timber, natural gas, oil and splendid coal. The proper use of these gifts is incumbent upon us. We may keep in mind Andrew Carnegie's saying that "It is a disgrace to die rich." The poor miser found in an Allegheny hovel last week after hoarding money for a lifetime, is no more to be pitied or despised than the man in any walk of life who accumulates a large amount of money under our beneficent laws and without recognizing his moral obligation to the community, sneaks off and dies like a dog without giving one dollar for benevolence, charity or civic betterment. Not many years ago I knew a peculiar old man who lived in the eastern part of this county, near the Monongahela river. The rich Pittsburg coal vein underlaid his farm. Through vanity and on account of a quarrel with relatives he let the contract for a monument as high as an oil derrick. Dying before its completion he provided by will that his executors should finish it and use the rest of his estate in building a wall around his cemetery lot with a pillar at each corner as high as the money he left would pay for. So today in a Quaker burying ground on the old National road, towering 80 feet above the hilltop, can be seen for miles around, the memorial, costing \$40,000, by which a foolish old man vainly strove to perpetuate his name.

While this sinful folly was being consummated, away at the other end of the county, within a mile of the West Virginia line, died Jerome

Plummer, another farmer. God had blessed him with an abundance of this world's goods and after providing for those naturally dependent upon him, he left \$33,000 as a fund to be invested under direction of the court and the income to be used throughout all coming time to teach temperance and fight the blighting liquor traffic. Thus was built an imperishable monument which will stand when time has obliterated the last vestige of that massive pillar of granite which marks the final resting place of one who did not appreciate his duty as a child of God and a brother of all mankind.

While most of us can not afford to do much in a material way to make the world brighter and better, yet every one can do something, if it is only to plant a shade tree or erect a watering trough along the highway. To make the surroundings of the traveler through life more comfortable and his sojourn here more happy are duties which all should find it pleasant to perform. Individual public spirit can be shown by giving such a grove as this for a township park or by fixing up and providing for the perpetual care of old graveyards. In this respect we are also far behind the New England towns. There all incorporated districts whether in country or city are known as towns. A gentleman who spent several weeks this summer in Massachusetts told me the other day that he found that many bequests had been made to the town which he visited. No less than \$389,000 had been given to that town by bequest or otherwise, most of it to be held in trust, either for the poor, the sick, the unfortunate; or for education, for parks, for playgrounds, or for some noble form of charity or civic improvement. How much money has East Finley township invested to carry on such splendid works? One thousand dollars will earn \$50 per year if invested at five per cent. That amount properly used would relieve many a human heartache and care for many a weary and afflicted one during every year of the future until the last syllable of recorded time.

The wilderness which our forefathers subdued and made to blossom as

the rose was their bequest of love to us. This section is destined to witness a wonderful transformation during the next few years. Our vast material resources are to be developed. Though the coal industry of Washington county is in its infancy 83 mines employing over 16,000 persons are already in operation. The county now has within its borders people from nearly every country of Europe and Asia and almost every language of those continents is here spoken. With the growth of our industries and coal development the tide of population will continue to flow in upon us with ever increasing force. Shall it overwhelm us? We must make a gallant fight if we would maintain the high quality of citizenship that has characterized the inhabitants of this region since our forefathers, one hundred and thirty or more years ago, "lighted on these hills the beacon fires of a pioneer civilization and planted there the standard of the cross."

Once I asked a man in a Spanish-American city what its population was. He answered, "1,000 responsible citizens and 19,000 irresponsible." That is 95 per cent of its inhabitants cared nothing for religion, owned no property and felt no obligation to be good citizens. It is no wonder they have unstable government in such places and are haunted constantly by the spectre of revolution. In that town, which is about the size of Washington, it takes 450 policemen to preserve order and protect people in their rights. It is not the number but the character of a people which makes a nation or a community great. The more responsible citizens you have in a community, the more people who anchor to the earth and own their own homes, the more people who are honest, industrious, sober and frugal, the more people who love God and keep his commandments, the greater force that community is for good in the world.

We must welcome the poor foreigner who comes from lands of oppression, as many of the pioneers did, to make a new home under the stars and stripes. He must be taught what constitutes good citizenship and helped to a knowledge of his rights and duties under our laws. 'One beer

agent should not be the first to greet him and give him the glad hand. We should not call these poor people Dagoes or Hunkies or Sheenies. Through schools for adult foreigners they should have a chance to learn the English language and be instructed how to protect themselves from the horde of sharpers and greedy officials who prey upon their ignorance. Most of these people are of sturdy races and they prove their enterprise by crossing the ocean to set up family altars anew in the land of which they have heard so much. They will not be drones in the hive. They can teach us economy and frugality now. They are grateful for kindness. Most of them will make good American citizens. Their children and grandchildren will take an important part in the up-building of this Nation. Within a few generations they will doubtless be blended into the race of future Americans which under God will lead the world to yet greater and nobler things.

And so as we gather in this beautiful grove upon this peaceful summer day let us highly resolve that as citizens of the great Republic and children of a just, wise and loving God that we will try to so perform our duties hereafter and so use His gifts as to advance His kingdom. May we understand that in this country the ballot is the safe-guard of our liberties, that no man should be bound by the tyranny of a party name, that the independent voter is the hope of the nation, that every voter should carry his conscience into the election booth with him and that he is responsible only to his conscience and his God for the way he marks his ballot and not to any political party.

With good schools, permanent roads, telephones, mail delivery, motor vehicles and the introduction of the

wonderful devices for public utilities and personal and family comfort, we can make country life so desirable as to counteract the trend from the farms caused by the lure of the city. "God made the country, man made the town." No man can live among these hills without breathing the breath of liberty and nourishing the love of country. Here within the limits of old Finley township three-quarters of a century ago far-seeing and patriotic men met at the house of Kenneth McCoy and resolved that human slavery must go, and their constant agitation and work brought glorious fruitage. Shall we not resolve that ere another generation passes that accursed twin relic of barbarism, the legalized liquor traffic, shall be crushed by the power of the ballot?

When Finley township was erected 121 years ago it numbered among its citizens Duncan McArthur, son of a poor Scotchman as his name might tell. Removing to Ohio when a young man he became governor of the Buckeye state. His career illustrates the possibilities of American citizenship. Who will be president of the United States forty years hence? Possibly some diligent boy, eager to learn, who is bending now over his books in an East Finley school. And so I say that your greatest product is men.

While I hope that the people of this neighborhood may continue to be blessed with abundant harvests, that vine and tree may yield fruit in plenty, that the mines soon to be opened here may produce thousands of tons of the best coal to do the work of the world and that its sale and mining may bring material prosperity to all, yet I also wish that old Finley may achieve more lasting fame through the multitude of good men and good women who make their homes among these beautiful hills.

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